4-11 FA

Family Readiness Group Pre-Deployment Training VI

March 8 - 9, 2005

Agenda

1. Welcome and Calendar Review – S3, MAJ Bateman
2. Media Awareness for Families – PAO, SSG Sipp
3. Advanced and Early Return of Dependents – RDC, CPT Turner
4. Deployment Issues – RDC, CPT Turner
5. POST & Battalion Website Upgrades – RDC, CPT Turner
6. FRG Handbook Review – RDC, CPT Turner
7. Closing Comments

Calendar Update

March through August 2005

Individual Training away from Home

Course/Training	# of Soldiers	Location
Signal Support of JTF-N	7	Ft Bliss, TX
Maintenance of Equipment for C Btry	4	Ft Lewis, WA
JRTC Recon	2	Ft Polk, LA
Pre Deployment Recon of Iraq/Kuwait	2	Iraq and Kuwait
IED detection training	1	Ft Bragg, NC
NCO Training	3	Ft Richardson, AK
Medical Training	6	Ft Lewis, WA
Emergency Ministry Training	1	Ft Sam Houston, TX
Advanced Medical Training	2	Ft Lewis, WA
Arabic Culture Training	4	Jordan
Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Training	10	Redstone Arsenal, AL
Rail Load Support	5	Ft Lewis, WA
Searching Detainee Training	1	Ft Leonard Wood, MO
Satellite Communications Training	1	Ft Gordon, GA
Lessons Learned	1	Ft Lewis, WA

Dealing with the Media

MEDIA AWARENESS FOR FAMILIES

We want to talk about America's troops and their families

- The Department of Defense (DoD) encourages media coverage of preparation for deployment and of departure.

- Never discuss operations, current or past.

- When asked to discuss general deployment numbers, general descriptions of unit equipment, mission and capabilities, always refer questioners to the Post Public Affairs Office (PAO).

- When asked to discuss any sensitive or personal issues of the Unit Family Readiness Group, always refer the questioners to the Rear Detachment Commander.

- Regarding *Your Family,* you must decide what personal information you are willing to discuss with questioners.

We want to talk about America's troops and their families

- There is no prohibition against family members providing interviews.

- *It's an individual choice whether to speak with reporters*.

- The media are performing a *vital service to democracy* – getting out the fact that **we are good people doing good things** for a good reason.

- What the media does is *vital to winning the Global War on Terrorism*.

- Remember, though, some things your loved ones are doing are *classified and that information must be protected*.

If you decide to talk to the media

Do

- Talk about your feelings.
- Express support for your loved one.
- Talk about your family support group.
- Enjoy being interviewed.
- Discuss only matters about which you have direct knowledge.
- Ignore the cameras and enjoy the interview.
- Be brief and concise. Use simple language, not jargon and acronyms.
- Take time to think about your answers. You don't have to answer instantly.
- Answer only one question at a time.
- Tell the reporter if you accidentally say something sensitive or classified.

- Be polite but firm when dealing with the media. You control the interview.
- Always make a positive point. (Example: "Yes, we miss him terribly, but we are managing everything here so that he can do his job without worrying about us.")
- Relax – speak to the reporter as though you are speaking to the friends back home.
- Ignore the cameras and speak directly to the reporter.
- Remove sunglasses.
- Talk about what your loved one normally does in the Army: For example, he is an artilleryman, etc.
- Tell your Rear Detachment Commander and PAO about the interview.

If you decide to talk to the media

Don't

- Violate OPSEC or discuss operational capabilities or future plans. This puts your loved one at greater risk. The Enemy also watches the news and reads the paper.

- Reveal the deployment location (unless already publicly announced). Be general – give the country or region, but not the city or exact location of your loved one's unit.

- Discuss the unit's specific operational mission for this deployment.

- Speculate about anything – length of deployment, what your loved one's unit is doing, etc. Don't answer speculative questions – stick to the facts and speak about only those things of which you have direct knowledge.

- Get angry. Your anger is fuel for sensationalist, irresponsible reporters.

- Let the reporter rush you. Take your time to formulate your answers and relax. Remember, you control the interview.

- Discuss political or foreign policy matters. We adhere to policy, we don't make policy.

- NEVER LIE to the media.

- Make "off the record" comments to reporters. Consider everything you say to a reporter to be "on the record."

- Say "no comment" to a reporter. If you don't know the answer, say so. If you don't want to answer, tell the reporter you prefer not to talk about that particular subject.

- Allow the reporter to badger or harass you. You control the interview, and you can end it at any time.

What to do before the interview

- Call PAO (353-6701) and the RDC CPT Turner (353-1597/1501) for additional guidance and assistance.

- Ask what outlet the journalist works for (Fairbanks News-Miner, CNN, NBC, etc.)

- Ask what the topic is.

- Establish ground rules – what you will and will not talk about.

- Check your appearance or have someone check you.

What to do during the interview

- Be conversational.

- Keep responses short if on camera – think ‘10-second sound bites’.

- Imagine you are talking to your neighbors or your family: Enjoy yourself.

- Remember, the journalist also wants you to do well.

- Remember ‘Operational Security’. Don’t reveal information that could potentially give the enemy an advantage.

What to do during after the interview

- Ask when the story will run.

- If you are uncomfortable with any of your answers, discuss it with the journalist – they don't want to publish anything that is incorrect or that will cause harm.

- Give a Point of Contact (POC) for unanswered questions – PAO – 353-6701.

- If you enjoyed being interviewed, say, "if you have any further questions, feel free to call me."

- Tell your chain of command and PAO about the interview.

Hoaxes and malicious pranks

• At Fort Stewart, GA, Army Investigators are trying to determine why a man delivered a false death notice and whether he was a soldier or a civilian wearing a military uniform.

• **"*Right off the bat, she noticed some things were not right,*" Agent Whetstone of Army CID said. "*The individual's uniform wasn't correct — there were no markings or name tags. Plus, the person was alone, and she knew one person does not make death notifications.*"**

• When the 3rd Infantry first deployed to Iraq for the 2003 invasion, some Fort Stewart families reported receiving phone calls from pranksters saying their Soldiers had been killed.

• **This time around, troops and their spouses got Pre-Deployment briefings that included detailed explanations of how death notices work.**

• Two soldiers, including a chaplain, in dress uniform always arrive to tell the family in person. The Army never makes notifications over the telephone, and all notifications are done between 0600 and 2200.

Summary

- Protect your loved one: Operational Security (OPSEC).
- Enjoy yourself.
- Stay in touch with your chain of command.
- Contact PAO for assistance; Office – 353-6701.

Questions

Advanced and Early Return of Dependents (ARD / ERD) Procedures

References

1. Army Regulation Number 55-46, Travel Overseas, paragraph 5-8 and 5-9.

2. Joint Federal Travel Regulations, volume 1, chapter 5, part J, paragraph U5900

References

ERD

Early Return Of Dependents

- When the Army requires you to move home early.
- WHY?
  - You are an embarrassment to the US Army.
  - Your presence is prejudicial to order, morale, or discipline.
  - Your safety in the OCONUS area cannot be guaranteed.
- NOBODY WANTS THIS ONE!

ARD

Advance Return Of Dependents

- When the Army authorizes you to move home early and pays for it.
- A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK THEY WANT THIS ONE!

No one can tell you where to live…

As a condition of recouping certain military- and government-regulated benefits, the Army asks that you follow a minimal number of lenient guidelines.

Your cooperation ensures the smooth operation of various Post functions, and secures a stable, fair and amiable military community for everyone.

What you CAN do

- Make a short trip home anytime you want.
- Move home anytime you want – at your own expense.

What you CANNOT do

- Leave your on-post quarters for more than 30 days without clearing (90 days with approved exception).

So, you want to go home…

- Movement from an overseas location is costly and time-intensive.

- Movement from a location like Alaska, with extremes in weather and severe restriction of resources, is *very* costly.

- The Army and the Government have established criteria to assist commanders in the decision to authorize an unexpected or Early (and very expensive) or Advanced Return of Dependents.

So, you want to go home…

Criteria for an ARD

- Essential medical treatment not available in AK (must be supported by medical documentation, including a physician's statement).

- Death, serious illness, or incapacitation of dependent caring for minor dependents (will move children home if mother dies).

- Educational facilities or housing for dependents is inadequate (must be a situation unknowable at the time of PCS to AK).

- Dependents justifiably concerned for their safety (requires approval by USARAK Commanding General).

- Dependent gets drafted.

- Employment not available for dependents over 18 (and resulting idleness is likely to cause embarrassment to the US).

- Divorce or annulment (the government will pay for this **once** – you cannot get remarried and then re-command sponsored!).

So, you want to go home…

Criteria for an ARD

- Compelling personal reasons.
  - Financial difficulties.
  - Marital difficulties.
  - Unforeseen family problems.
  - Death or serious injury of close relatives.
  - Reasons of a humanitarian or compassionate nature.

** "Recommendations from religious, mental health, financial management, family counseling, and legal agencies should be obtained. If the member's situation does not meet the criteria, **the request must be denied.** *Early return of dependents under this subparagraph must be applied judiciously; it is a last resort."* -JFTR, U5J-4

So, you want to go home…

Process

- The Soldier (or spouse) submits DA 4187 thru Battery to S1.

- Acquire documentation from religious, mental health, financial management, family counseling, and legal agencies.

- Battery Commander forwards to the S1, who verifies, turn in an updated DD Form 93, Record of Emergency Data
Command Sponsorship.

- Battalion Commander forwards to Brigade.

- Brigade Commander forwards to PSB.

- PSB types endorsement and forwards to the Post Commander for final approval.

- Post returns appeal to PSB, who writes travel orders; Soldier or dependent then may make official travel arrangements through the transportation office.

Considerations you should think about

• The government *will not* pay for dependents to move *back* to Alaska after the Soldier returns from deployment, whether the move to CONUS was at government *or* personal expense – unless the Soldier serves a consecutive tour in Alaska (IPCOT) and is command sponsored—one does not mean the other!

• The government *will* pay to move dependents to the Soldier's next duty station upon receipt of PCS orders if the move to CONUS was at government expense.

• If the move to CONUS was at personal expense (no ARD), the government will pay the amount equal to the cost of moving from the Soldier's Home of Record -- any difference must be paid by you.

• If dependents move back to Alaska at personal expense, the government will pay for the move to the next duty station from Alaska.

• A Soldier whose dependents return to CONUS cannot remain in government family housing.

Typical ARD Questions

Q: "I have two children under 1 year of age; without my spouse, I'm afraid I cannot manage--do I qualify for ARD?"

A: Not for the stated reason.

Q: "I have an EFM, and he/she is required to travel to Anchorage every 45 days; do I qualify for ARD?"

A: No—the same provisions in place now should still apply during the deployment.

Q: "I want to move in with my family while my husband is deployed, and understand that the Army will not pay to move me back to AK; do I qualify for ARD?"

A: Simply wanting to relocate does not meet the criteria for an ARD.

Q**: If Family Members are authorized Advanced Return, what are the benefits at the receiving location, and will the Army pay to PCS them to the SM's next duty station?**

A: There is no government housing authorization at the end location; other benefits are subjugated by location; the Army will relocate you to your spouse's follow-on PCS, with restrictions (OCONUS tours with command sponsorship restrictions)

Q: Block Leave after JRTC--is it Bde or Bn organized?

A: Block Leave is Bn organized, with guidance from Bde; whether or not Soldiers are authorized leave from LA or must return first to FWA has not been determined.

Typical ARD Questions

Q: Is the spouse permitted to depart the command as an ARD, without the knowledge of the SM? What is the impact of this predicament to the return of the SM? Does SPOA wording mitigate this?

A: The Army has no authority to force a spouse to live anywhere; the ARD CANNOT be completed without the SM's knowledge, as it is the unit command which must process the request through to Brigade, and it is the RDC's responsibility to inform the battalion commander of all ARD requests.

Q: What are the requirements for clearing Housing?

A: In order to clear Housing, a Clearing Appointment must be scheduled. Various documents are required as a part of the Clearing Process.

Q: Is a SPOA required to clear Housing?

A: A SPOA IS REQUIRED to clear Housing.

Q: Is a separate SPOA required to transport goods? To arrange a Transpo Appt or Pick-Up?

A: A separate SPOA, specifically detailing authority to arrange for and execute Transportation pack-up, shipment and receipt of goods, is required.

Typical ARD Questions

Q: Are there exceptional benefits associated with an ERD that are not associated with an ARD?

A: No. An ERD is directed; an ARD is authorized.

Q: What total entitlements are available to families if they ERD or ARD.

A: No additional entitlements are available, and some current benefits will be subjugated by location, and some benefits (e.g. gov't housing) will be lost.

Q: Who may request an ARD?

A: Either the Spouse of SM may request an ARD.

Questions

Deployment Issues and Requests for Information (RFIs)

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Q: How can we improve the 4-11 website?

A: Link the 4-11 Website to the FWA page and revamp to include FAQs and usable links; add tabs for the RDC, Notes for Deployment, the Calendar, and POCs and what they can do for you. Demonstrate at the March and April FRGPDTs.

Q: How can we ensure families and concerned relatives stay abreast of deployment updates and issues?

A: Compose and mail a letter to Families and Relatives regarding deployment issues and information, such as mailing addresses, Rear D POCs, web info, etc. This must be done by the first week of March.

Q: How do we mitigate last-minute ARD requests, which cannot or should not be accepted?

A: ID ARD/ERD candidates early, and send out info to Families at the March FRGPDT. Establish a firm Bde-sponsored cutoff for ARODs

Q: When do ARDs move?

A: AROD families must be moved over the Block Leave Period. If this is not possible, spouses must conduct and complete the move without the aid of the SM. This policy will be explicitly briefed in March and reiterated in April (FRGPDT). A cutoff for ARODs will be set.

Q: How do we ensure SMs and Family Members know and understand the firm Block leave policy?

A: Develop and disseminate the Command Message regarding Leave. Brief at the March and April FRGPDTs.

Deployment Issues and Requests for Information (RFIs)

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Q: How do we ensure SMs are aware of the ‘small fry’, easy-to-forget issues regarding deployment?

A: Develop a Soldier Brief for the 1 April Pay Day Brief. Include: HHG, POV, Finance, R&R process; a budgeting class from Felicia Jackson; a taxes class; packing list with soldier-purchase recommendations.

Q: How do we ensure the Rear D Commander has the latest and most useful information to assist in FRG management?

A: Collect all Family Info and Family Care Plan Packets from all batteries and 21 BSC on 22 April
(after the 19 April FRGPDT) for consolidation in the RDC Safe.

Post and Battalion Website Upgrades

FRG Handbook Review

4-11 Family Readiness Group Handbook

1. Overview of FRGs – What is an FRG, what does it do, and why do I care?

2. Preparing for Deployment.

3. Deployment – Checklists for everything; how can I help my spouse? How can I help myself?

4. Family Pre-Deployment Questionnaire.

Useful Reference Pages

- **Finance worksheet – p. 219**
- **Property accountability worksheet – p. 233**
- **Pay info & how to read an LES – p. 272**
- **TriCare and the Army Health Care System – p. 293**
- **Flowcharts and Self-help – 'Where do I go for…who can help me when…what do I do**

FRG Activities

1. Tubing party – a great success!

2. Easter Party – March 26th at Arctic Light Elementary

3. Next FRG-PDT – 19-20 April, JRTC

    - JRTC Deployment and Training
    - Photoplay of the Pre-Deployment Site Survey
    - Discussion Panel
        - Garrison Commander and G3
        - Chiefs of Housing and Transportation
        - COLs Nishimura (MEDDAC) and Hamilton (DENTAC)

4. 14-16 June – FRG-PDT for Children, Glass Park.

    - 14th – Under 5 years
    - 15th – 6 – 11 years old
    - 16th – 12 -18 years old

5. 12-13 July – Final OIF Pre-Deployment Brief

Some additional benefits of the deployment

Under the provisions of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940, you qualify, with valid orders to deploy to theater, for the following:

• Reduced interest rate on mortgage payments.
-- **Call your lender**; they receive gov't. acknowledgement for providing this service; rates may be lowered as far as 6%.

• Reduced interest rate on credit card debt.
-- **Call your bank or credit lender**; like mortgage lenders, they receive gov't. acknowledgement for providing this service; rates are lowered to 6%, and many companies, e.g. AMEX and VISA, offer balance transfers with interest rates of 6%, just for service members.

• Protection from eviction if your rent is $1,200 or less.
-- This is Federal Law, an no one may break it.

• Delay of all civil court actions, such as bankruptcy, foreclosure or divorce proceedings.

To clarify the SSRA

One of the most significant provisions under the act limits the amount of interest that may be collected on debts of persons in military service to 6 percent per year during the period of deployment.

This provision **applies to all debts incurred prior to the commencement of deployment** and includes interest on **credit card debt, mortgages, car loans and other debts**. The provision, applies to pre-service debts, and the interest rate reduction doesn't occur automatically — service members must request it.

Once a service member requests the rate reduction, the creditor must either comply or apply for court relief. The SSRA puts the burden on the creditor to show that military service has not "materially affected" a member's ability to repay the debt.

For answers to all Deployment-related questions

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